

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC ALAMEDA THEATER RESTORATION PROJECT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the historic Art Deco Alameda Theater, in Alameda, California. The theater first opened in 1932 and boasted one of the largest screens in the Bay Area. Designed by the prominent San Francisco architect, Timothy L. Pflueger, the theater opened shortly after another one of Pflueger's historically significant theaters, the Paramount in Oakland, California.

The 2 theaters share many of the same finishes and details. The Alameda Theater building was under private ownership and in continuous operation as a cinema until 1979. It has undergone a number of adverse changes to its interior finishes since that time. The deteriorating theater sat vacant or underutilized until the City of Alameda acquired the property in July 2006 and commenced restoration efforts in November 2006.

The Alameda Theater restoration project is the signature component of a larger downtown revitalization project in the city's Park Street Historic District. A newly built movie Cineplex will be a part of the Alameda Theater complex and all patrons will enter through the historic Art Deco Alameda Theater lobby to access all the screens in the Cineplex.

The Alameda Theater restoration project is a public/private partnership that resulted in the blend of a new theater complex and the saving of a historic treasure in the City of Alameda.

The City will celebrate the reopening of the Alameda Theater at a gala on May 21st and a civic ceremony on May 24th. I am confident theatergoers will appreciate the restored historic Art Deco Alameda Theater and will enjoy the entertainment benefits it will bring for years to come. Congratulations to the city of Alameda and all who had a hand in the development and completion of the historic Alameda Theater Restoration Project.

LOU BRISSIE: A HERO ON THE BASEBALL AND BATTLE FIELDS

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD.

[From the Savannah Morning News, April 29, 2008.]

(By Nathan Dominitz)

Former major league all-star pitcher Lou Brissie can tell stories about his ballpark encounters with the likes of Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Connie Mack and Satchel Paige.

Monday night and [Tuesday], people are sharing stories about Brissie, Savannah's own living legend for his starring role on the 1947 South Atlantic League championship team.

"We didn't measure speed in those days, but I know he must have thrown close to 100 miles an hour," said longtime friend Bill

Hockenbury, an all-star third baseman on the 1947 Savannah Indians, a Class A affiliate of the then-Philadelphia Athletics. "I'm serious. He just reared back and threw that ball."

Brissie, now 83, might have enough power in his left arm to throw out the first pitch [Tuesday] night at Grayson Stadium, where the Savannah Sand Gnats will retire his No. 3 jersey before the 7 p.m. game against the Hickory Crawdads. The first 1,000 fans receive a replica Brissie jersey T-shirt courtesy of the Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society.

There was a "Lou Brissie Day" scheduled in 2007, but it was rained out, rescheduled and rained out again late last season in Savannah. Brissie didn't think a higher power was sending a message.

"No, he speaks plainer than that," said Brissie, a North Augusta, S.C., resident for the last 30-plus years with his wife, Diana.

The Sand Gnats also organized a banquet in his honor Monday night at the Riverfront Marriott. Again it rained, but thankfully this event was indoors. Attendees received the T-shirt as well as a figurine of Brissie pitching. Brissie's own story is worthy of a movie, and indeed it was re-enacted decades ago for a television program starring former pro athlete Chuck Connors, famous as "The Rifleman." Brissie also is the subject of an ongoing book project.

TRUE GRIT

The dramatic elements are there. A teenage pitching prospect enlists in the U.S. Army during World War II. On a battlefield in Northern Italy in 1944, the corporal nearly has his left leg blown off when an artillery shell lands at his feet.

"I broke an ankle and my feet. My leg was shattered in 30 pieces between the knee and the ankle," said Brissie, who would receive two Purple Heart medals and a Bronze Star during his military service.

Amputation was an option, but Brissie knew that would end hopes of a baseball career. He persuaded doctors to save the leg, and credits a military surgeon, Capt. Wilbur Brubaker, for doing the incredible.

"I was just a guy with a dream," said Brissie, who would spend parts of seven seasons in the majors with the Athletics and Indians, including an appearance in the 1949 All-Star Game. "I think I was just blessed from Day One. There weren't guys who attain the major leagues who were as fortunate and blessed as I was."

Brissie, through 23 surgeries and countless setbacks, would pitch again—eventually for the Philadelphia Athletics, who originally signed him in 1940 and resigned the 6-foot-4, 210-pound lefty in 1946.

He was assigned to Savannah, posting a 23-5 record, 1.91 ERA and SAL record 278 batters in 254 innings. He wore a brace on his left leg, which was about 1½ inches shorter than the right. He also had the admiration of his teammates, who saw his daily routine of playing with a leg that under the bandages "looked like a piece of tissue paper," Hockenbury said.

"He was our hero," recalled Hockenbury, a World War II veteran and one of half a dozen Indians to eventually make it to the big leagues. "He was great. He was our leader. He was our superstar."

HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

Savannah responded, packing Grayson Stadium when Brissie pitched and often when he didn't, Hockenbury said.

"We had great community support," Brissie said. "The fans were just tremendous. We had community business support. I think it was the ideal time after World War II and before television."

The talented team, playing in a league stocked with future major leaguers, had the

unity necessary for success over the long summer months.

"In all of that time, I never heard two guys have a bad word or get upset," Brissie said. "Everybody was for everybody else. It's really one of my greatest memories."

The retiree makes weekly visits to a Veterans Administration hospital and speaks with injured servicemen. He shares motivational stories and asks them not to give up their dreams.

"You've got to live each day and look for something better, and it will show up," he said.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, March 12, 2008, Friday, March 14, 2008, Wednesday, April 8, 2008 and Monday, April 14, 2008, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall votes 133, 146, 169, 170, 171, 172, 183, 184 and 185.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" for rollcall votes 133, 146, 170, 171, 183, 184 and 185 and "nay" on rollcall votes 169 and 172.

"OPERATION HOLIDAY CHEER"

HON. THOMAS H. ALLEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Kiwanis Club of Gorham, Maine for acknowledging the courage and sacrifices of the children of Maine's military families through their program entitled "Operation Holiday Cheer."

Kiwanis is an organization dedicated to service to children and youth through initiatives intended to improve the quality of life of children in communities around the world. Currently, Kiwanis has over 500,000 members internationally, representing 96 countries with 34 clubs in Maine.

On July 17, 2007, the Kiwanis Club of Gorham, later joined by the Kiwanis Clubs of Maine, launched Operation Holiday Cheer, a program to provide a holiday gift to each participating child of Maine's military families, including, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corp, Coast Guard, Reserves and National Guard. Over 9,000 children in Maine have a parent serving in the military.

In executing Operation Holiday Cheer, the Kiwanis organization acquired, wrapped and distributed a holiday gift to each participating military child in over 140 cities and towns throughout the State of Maine. Included with each gift was a hand-written note thanking the child and his or her family which read, "On behalf of the Kiwanis Clubs of Maine and the people of the State of Maine, we would like to offer you this token of our appreciation for your sacrifice. You are the child of a Maine military family and the bravery that you show every day by sharing your parent to help protect our country is being recognized and honored. You should be extremely proud of your